Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society
OF RHODE ISLAND.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES:

Fourth Series, No. 12.

MY BOYHOOD

AT

WEST POINT.

PROF. WILLIAM WHITMAN BAILEY,

[Late of Company D, Tenth Rhode Island Infantry.]



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OF EVENTS IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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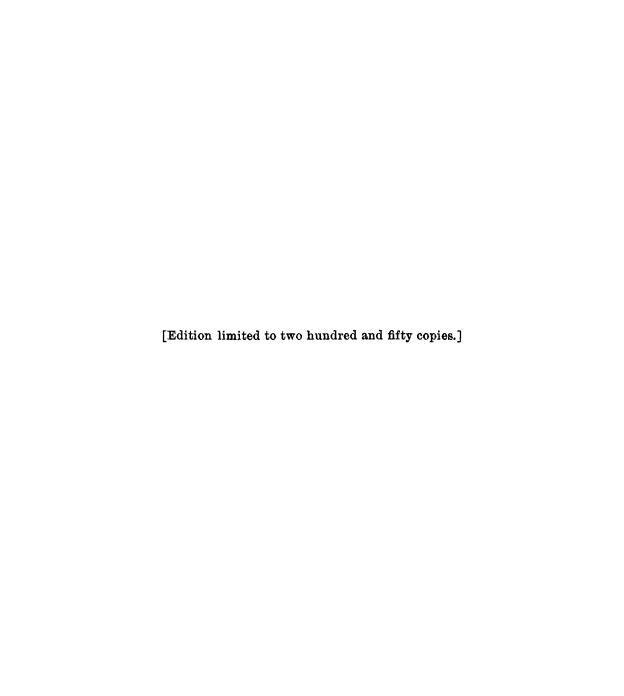
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WEST POINT.

BY

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MY BOYHOOD AT WEST POINT.

I was born at West Point, N. Y., where my father, a graduate of the Military Academy, was Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology. He stood fifth in the class of 1832. Of his classmates, the best known are Benjamin S. Ewell, of Virginia, who stood third; General Erasmus D. Keyes, tenth; Colonel John N. Macombe, of the Engineers, died March, 1889; Colonel James H. Simpson, of the same corps; Lieutenant-Colonel Lorenzo Sitgreaves; General Randolph B. Marcy, Inspector-General of the Army of the Potomac and author of "Army Life on the Border;" Colonel James V. Bomford, and Humphrey Marshall.

My father's class rank would, in our time, have entitled him to a commission in a staff corps, but he entered the First Artillery, performing garrison duty at Fort Monroe, Bellona Arsenal, in Virginia, and Fort Moultrie, Charleston harbor, S. C. He was at the last station during the nullification troubles in South Carolina, when, it will be recalled, General Jackson exhibited an energy which stifled rebellion at the outset. I have letters describing the scenes of that exciting time.

The duties of an officer were never congenial to my father, and so, in 1838, he welcomed his appointment by Joel Poinsett, then Secretary of War, as professor at the Military Academy. He was the first incumbent of his chair. About this time he married Maria Slaughter, daughter of Samuel Slaughter, of Culpeper Court House, Virginia. This name is familiar enough to those of you who were in the Army of the Potomac. I was the youngest of four children, and was born February 22, 1843. My father filled his position till the time of his death, February 26, 1857.

If environment and date of birth are at all significant—and there are those who lay stress upon much slighter details—Nature certainly designed me

for a soldier. Queer enough! Here I am a peaceful man of science. My military service has been of
the very slightest, but I have always burned with
martial ardor. In this respect I am reminded of
that hero of Captain Marryatt, whose spirit led him
into battle, but whose legs would carry him out.
Others, including General Sheridan, have confessed
to this weakness of the knees in face of grape and
canister. In fact, no man knows what he will do till
he has been there. Many conspicuous home-guardsmen would have ended the war in a year, only somehow they did not get to the front!

Old Dr. Walter Wheaton, the surgeon of the post at the time of my arrival, and who, by the way, was from Rhode Island, insisted upon it that a boy born on Washington's birthday should bear that hero's name. My father, however, with characteristic prescience and modesty, declined to handicap me with a top-heavy title. I have thanked him a thousand times. My old colored nurse, for years as well known at West Point as the Superintendent or the Quartermaster (two officials of whom we heard not a little), used to say that the celebration was in

full blast when I first came in with a vigorous hurrah. The memory of nurses is proverbially fallacious.

My earliest memories are associated with the military routine of the Academy. For fourteen years I never suspected that there could be any other life. The daily duties of the post; the guard-mounting, section-calls, squad, company, and battalion drills; the heavy and light artillery practice; the cavalry manœuvres on the plain, or the riding-school exercises; the fencing, dancing and sword exercise; the pontoon bridge-making; the fashioning of gabions, fascines, and sap-rollers; the pitching and striking of tents; indeed, all the minutiæ of the out-door life of the institution were perfectly famil-The old Scott's manual was a second naiar to me. ture, and I saw the introduction of that of Hardee. This used to be called the "Shanghai Drill," and I remember that conservatives pooh-poohed it all, for even boys will cling to tradition. So, this last summer, when I saw the breech-loading manual and the modern manœuvres, I felt like saying my "Nunc dimittis."

I have a quite distinct recollection of the close of the Mexican war, in 1848, and the return of the Sappers and Miners, as the engineers were then styled, to West Point. Either then, or justafter, they were under the command of a certain Lieutenant George B. McClellan. General McClellan's father, Dr. McClellan, of Philadelphia, had performed an operation on my brother, and was a family friend. The young lieutenant was frequently at our house. I remember their long beards, and, if I am not much mistaken, the particular position they assumed on the plain. This was on the pathway in front of the Superintendent's quarters, now occupied by Gen. J. G. Parke.

Soon after there was an illumination of the old North and South barracks, and I can see, even now, the word "Victory," as it was formed by the lights on the former building. There was a day-time procession, too, in which the cadets bore the trophy flags, which are now draped in the chapel. The band played a Mexican march. At that time and for some years after, there was much talk about the Mexican war. During one winter my mother's sister, whose

husband, Captain Merrill, had been killed at Molino-del-Rey, was with us at our house. She and her four orphaned children brought home to us the fear-ful sacrifices of the struggle. My father always regarded it as an unjust and uncalled for conflict, but one which had fully vindicated the name and fame of the Academy. In this connection General Scott's words are interesting:

"I give it as my fixed opinion, that but for our graduated cadets the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in the first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas, in less than two campaigns, we conquered a great country and a peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish."

In certain material ways West Point has greatly changed since my boyhood. Such a thing as a paved sidewalk was then unknown. I used to study by a whale-oil lamp or a candle. There was no gas. All the houses were innocent of furnaces and bath-rooms. In winter the ways were muddy, and in summer, dusty. Fire-places and stoves supplied the place of the steam-heaters and furnaces of the present time. In winter we were cut off from the world, the Hud-

son frozen and the railroads not built. Even after the Hudson river road was constructed, there were often times when it was unsafe to cross from Garrison or Cold Springs on the ice. There was no telegraph. When the first telegraph came to West Point, the company was compelled to erect ornamental poles. These were painted green and each had a gold eagle at top. They excited much derision among the irreverent. The only communication in the earlier days of my boyhood was by boat in summer, and, in winter, by stage over the mountains to some station on the Erie railroad.

Now, the West Shore railroad has a station at West Point, and, wonder never to be anticipated, tunnels under that sacred promontory. I never think of it without a feeling akin to that of Ruskin. Here is a road which was not needed by anybody, that bankrupted the original owners, which does not pay, even now, allowed to scrape the face of nature, and destroy forever some of the finest scenery in the world. Then, too, the old isolation and seclusion of West Point, which made it so charming, has gone, and with it, much of the former quiet. It is

now more subject to incursions. Of course, this can be stopped, but not without irritation and the engendering of unpleasant feeling. It is the national academy and the people have the right to see it. I found that the present superintendent, General Parke, was very free in granting permits to land. Surely nothing is funnier than the aimless wandering of excursionists and their helpless explanations of military matters. When one lady asked, this summer, whether the cadets washed their own white trousers, I was in imminent danger of a convulsion. does not, now-a-days, meet at parade, as in my time, a purely army circle. The whole character and appearance of the spectators is different. But this remark applies only to the summer. After the 28th of August there are comparatively few visitors, and I think that only then, or in May, is the better time to go. The corps is then full, the drills perfect, and the weather comfortable.

Of course, in the winters I have referred to, the river was frozen solid, frequently offering a fine ground for skating, and serving as a highway to Newburgh and other points up or down the stream. I

remember when the plain was not level as it now is. Water would accumulate in the depressions and freeze, and the cadets used to skate on these temporary ponds. Execution, or "Gallows Hollow," the "dimple," as some one has called it, "in the face of West Point," sometimes had a pond in it. Many a good skate have I had there. Near it stood the mortar battery, built by the "sappers and miners," and used for the instruction of cadets. On the other side was the post ice-house. The boys used to play tag over the embankments, mortars, and magazines, and worry the life out of old "Bum Owens," the sergeant of police. I used to pat and fondle the big guns here, or in the siege battery, and I think had little idea of their terror, until once, in bathing at Washington's Valley, just below the target, a shower of grape and canister whistled over my head. good father, artillery officer as he had been, under these circumstances would often show the discretion which accompanies valor, and make excellent time up the rocks.

A change which has been incidental to the building of the West Shore railroad will at once strike the eye of any old resident who now returns. This is the filling in of the flats below the cemetery, in front of Camp Town, which, in a sanitary point of view, has no doubt been an excellent thing, but which has sadly marred the foreground of a superb view. While on the subject of changes I should mention the new Observatory, which crowns the ruins of old Fort Webb. It was the compensation of the West Shore railroad for tunnelling under the old one.

I think I must have attended school for the first time in 1851. The old school-house for officers children is, in part, still standing, and is now occupied by Lieutenant Braden, a retired officer, who coaches applicants and teaches the juveniles of the post. It stood between the house then occupied by the famous Professor Dennis H. Mahan, and quarters I have seen filled by such well-known men as Gens. G. W. Cullum and J. G. Barnard. Of course, it had no official connection with the Academy, although of necessity much tinctured by its methods and discipline. Thus, our marks were on the scale of three, we entered and left school with the bugle

call, and many of our plays were military. The list of my schoolmates is somewhat interesting. My best friend, the only one admitted to my youthful penetralia, was Robert E. Lee, Jr., son of the famous Confederate general, who, from 1852 to 1855, was superintendent of the Post. Other boys present were Col. W. G. Bartlett, now of the United States Infantry; his brother, Col. Charles Bartlett, also in the Regular Infantry; Joseph Barnes, son of the late surgeon-general of our army; Preston Moore, son of the surgeon-general of the Confederate army; the two sons of the late most amiable Medical Inspector-General Cuyler; (one of them, James M., afterwards graduated in the Engineers. Will Cuyler, I am told, was killed at Gettysburg. They were grandchildren of Judge Wayne, of the United States Supreme Court.) John W. Weir, son of Professor Robert W. Weir, and himself now professor of art at Yale University; Major Henry Brewerton, of the United States Artillery, whose father preceded Gen. R. E. Lee as superintendent; Lieutenant Charles Roe, of the cavalry, now retired, and well-known as the officer who finally placed the battle monument

on the little Big Horn to Custer and his ill-fated command; Colonel Guy V. Henry, of the Infantry, Captain John W. French and others, many of whom also entered the service. Some are dead, and those who survive are getting old. They were not all at school with me at once; our membership fluctuated with the change of station of officers. The professors only are in any degree permanencies at West Point, and even they are subject to retirement. All others are transferred, unless for cause, every four years. The 28th of August often brought a change to us as great as to the army mess. There was much curiosity always manifested as to what the new boys "Could we lick 'em or not?" I rememwere like. ber having the last question settled, at one time, to the entire satisfaction of the other party. We quarrelled on politics in the Fremont campaign, or just before it, when our fathers were ranging themselves on opposite sides of the fast-widening line. This preliminary contest, I regret to say, was by no means prophetic of what afterwards occurred at Appomatox.

Despite these little tiffs which would sometimes occur, we all remain, that is, the few of us who are

left, firm friends. I met one of the old boys, Lieutenant Roe, this summer. I had left him a child, and found him again, a veteran, as old-looking, certainly, as myself, his senior by some years. There is nothing like a study of botany for maintaining perpetual youth. It beats the fountain of Ponce de Leon. Allow me to commend it.

We boys were a terror to the "Plebes," as the new cadets are called, shouting after them, "Hep! Hep!" imitating their awkward ways (and what in this world is so awkward as a Plebe?) and generally making ourselves disagreeable at the expense of these "animals" or "things." We ought to have been caned, and I rejoice to say we sometimes were, by the victims themselves. A favorite revenge was to wash our faces with snow. I can feel it now, the rasping, stifling sensation, and the poignant stab to my dignity. Still, it is a certain satisfaction to think that MacPherson, or Sheridan, or Bonaparte, or Fitz Lee, or Beauty Stuart, or Hartsuff, have condescended to chastise so feeble an enemy

On the other hand we were often evangels of peace and good will. Go where I will, to any camp or

garrison, and I find to this day a soldier's welcome of an army boy. I believe a stave of "Benny Havens" would carry me by the inner guard of Schofield himself. Many a pie or cake have I smuggled into barracks. I was once in a room just as inspection was coming on. The cadets put me in the fire-place and clapped the board over me. There I sat, a trembling, guilty thing, until the officer of the day passed on. I have a vague notion that Colonel Loomis L. Langdon may cherish a recollection in common with me.

What a throng of memories some one name, like Custis Lee, or Greble (poor fellow, he was killed at Big Bethel), or Hartsuff, Comstock, or Weitzel, or Andy Webb, or McCook, will awaken! Some officer crosses my orbit whom I have not seen for years. In a moment I am a boy again, and the old scenes, the loved faces, the dear, familiar voices, are with me once again.

Colonel Hawkins, the present commandant, said to me this summer, what I think we West Point people all know, "It is the saddest place in the world!" When I go back I feel like Rip Van Winkle after his

sleep in those mystic mountains dimly seen up the Here is the old routine of long years ago, precisely the same calls, the same parades, and in precisely the same places, but the actors, where are they? Go out to the cemetery yonder, that peaceful, silent spot, so pathetic with the names of the dead. Your friends are mostly there, the old professors and their wives, the faithful old soldiers, the honest servants, and the gallant officers. Many are mentioned here, and in the Register, for meritorious service, single-hearted devotion to God and country. Where is there a spot more sacred? Here lies the trusty Anderson with the simple record, "Fort Sumter, 1861." Brave officer, simple-hearted gentleman, all honor to his memory! Near by is the tomb of the great commander, General Winfield Scott. How well I remember him and his accomplished wife! the devoted friend of my family. Here is buried Quincy A. Gillmore, his grave this last summer still covered with the memorial flowers of the Grand Army. The dashing Custer lies here; Buford, the true and brave; Alonzo H. Cushing, "faithful unto death at Gettysburg; "General Cuvier Grover; Sykes, that

glorious hero of a hundred battles. His monument is "erected by loving comrades." These, and many more, no less worthy, here "sleep their last sleep." In this final repose there is no distinction of rank. We note the names of many enlisted men, true in their station, as I am proud to say those regulars always were. Old Twiggs could play the traitor himself, but not a man did he tempt over with him. Look at the colors of those old regiments; some of them are at West Point. They are battle-stained and scarred with records of victories. Those who bore and conquered with them need no praise of mine. The volunteers have lacked no eulogists. The deeds of these brave fellows are yet unsung.

This last summer I was the frequent guest of Ryder Post, No. 598, of the Department of New York, at Highland Falls, just below West Point. It has a membership of one hundred, and many of the comrades are, or have been, in the regular service. I have never met a heartier greeting than was extended to me by these old boys. Non-commissioned officers and privates, most of them, but in the real sense soldiers and gentlemen. It will pay any comrade who

hears me to-night, to "take in" Ryder Post if he is ever up the Hudson. I am betraying no secret of the order when I say that my password was simply "Bailey" You can use it if you desire. I was an old West Point boy. Many had known me or my parents. I was received more as a son than as a comrade. There was no doubt about it, I was welcome.

Speaking of the enlisted men that lie in the cemetery, I must mention old Benz, for forty years the bugler at the Point. Since the bugle was invented surely old Benz has never had an equal; superiors are quite out of the question. Often in my dreams I hear the melody of "call to quarters" floating through those old hills. A simple monument has been erected to him by graduates and friends, to whom he was dear. Why did not some one tell me of the plan?

Many of the present buildings of the Military Academy I saw constructed. I can remember well when the present cadet barracks were not. The old North barracks, which I easily recall, stood near the east side of the present plain, between it and the

cavalry ground. In the north end-I think I am right—was kept the post fire engine. This was of the old-fashioned kind. At any alarm of fire it was rushed out, manned by the cadets, and sent spinning to the objective point. Bucket companies were formed, and water passed rapidly along the line. In the whole of my life at West Point I do not recall a fire, though there was a disastrous one just before my day, when the old Academy building and all the archives of the institution were lost. A few years ago, one cold winter night, the cadet barracks came near being destroyed. The cadets worked gallantly to extinguish the flames. At present the valuable records are kept in the fire-proof "Headquarters building," erected within a few years, back of the chapel. There is now, too, a better supply of water, brought from Long Pond, away up in the mountains, and the cadets are exercised, as I saw myself, this year, with a steam fire engine.

Back of the North barracks was a long coal yard. In its last days I recall this barrack as a crazy old affair, rat-infested and difficult to heat. I feel sad to think that I am now among the comparative

few who ever saw it. General Parke and myself compared notes concerning those times in a conversational way this summer, and found that we old fellows had many recollections in common.

The South barracks faced the plain, opposite the end of the present Academic Building, where, until recently, the summer "hops" took place. Its old pump still remains, opposite the eastern tower of the present barracks. I refreshed myself at it the past summer while I watched the "setting up drill" of the poor "plebes," and noted the spruce corporals as they directed their manœuvres. This is their innings. They were "plebes" last year. Hazing, as such, no longer exists. Reduction of a plebe to his proper level of absolute insignificance is affected soon enough in the course of drill. I never see these squad-drills without the desire to witness in them certain young friends of mine, in whom self-assertion has superseded self-respect or respect for others. In one day of it any surviving starch is so diluted as to be harmless and even pitiable. Nothing is left but the blues. By all means let us have military drill in the High School. Better cherish the dreaded military spirit, than the lack of spirit of a molly-coddle!

My own house, afterwards so long occupied by that quaint and genial old soldier and perfect gentleman, Professor Kendrick, and later the residence of Dr. Alden (now, February, 1889, medical inspector of the Department of Dakota), the post surgeon, a graduate of Brown, faced the company-ground in front of the barrack. It was the first of the line of quarters facing the parade, on the east side of the plain. One house, nearer the barracks, and on a line with it, soon to be removed to make a site for the new gymnasium, I have seen occupied by many well-known officers, General Erasmus D. Keyes, a classmate of my father's; Colonel Scott, the son-inlaw of the General; General McDowell and General McClellan. My yard extended back to the hills and in rear of it was the road to old Fort Putnam. The barracks have been enlarged since those days. The western wing faced our garden, affording the cadets a good chance to keep informed of our supply of grapes, pears, and chickens. I remember several destructive raids, premonitory of wars to come; lesons in foraging, wherein boys are apt scholars. It speaks well for the modern morale, that such flagrant

outrages no longer occur. But in those days cadet "hashes" were an institution, and the whole post was put under involuntary tribute to these clandestine orgies. They were conducted with extreme secrecy and at peril of severe punishment. Specimens of cadet hash that I have seen would hardly tempt one to forsake the regular mess. That, however, old officers tell me, was vile enough. Sour bread, rancid butter, etc., was the rule. There is a story current to the effect that a certain cadet found a small mouse in the bread or pie. This he indignantly exhibited to the head waiter, which functionary, not at all abashed, remarked, "You cannot expect us, for the terms, to furnish rats!" Now, all this is changed. The fare is not only ample; it is elegant. Instead of the long, dirty tables and wretched fare of long ago, there are now separate little tables for the accommodation of a limited number, covered with clean linen, provided with napkins, well supplied, well served, and with attentive waiters. A cadet's incessant exercise, from reveille to tattoo, or his long hours of winter study, require that he should be well

fed. The present commissary, Major Spurgin, appears to be the man for his place.

When they first arrived the plebes used to be put in the wing of the barracks nearest my house, and were drilled almost under its windows. A cadet captain, always of the first class, was placed in command over them, and a detail of corporals, or other third class men, then, as now, conducted the squad drills.

After the new barracks were built, the military calls, reveille, tattoo, etc., as well as the bugle-notes of the hours, were all sounded very near my home. These once familiar tunes have never lost their charm. I cherish, even now, the memory of the calls by which I used to go to school. I hated them then. What well regulated boy does not? I have already spoken of Benz, the bugler. An equally well-known old soldier was Charley Rose, the drum-major. He had reduced strutting and the swinging of the baton to a fine art. All other incumbents of his office seem tame after him. Withal, he was one of the best of fellows; modest and kind; an exemplary soldier always. Old Elsen, of the band, was another fix-

ture. He has only lately retired and is still living. Of Mr. Apelles, the leader of the band, it is sufficient to say that he lived and died a respected member of our own glorious American Band. This summer, in Ryder Post, Grand Army of the Republic, of Highland Falls, I renewed my acquaintance with many of the old enlisted men, among them that faithful soldier Sergeant Rigney, of the Ordnance, who, after thirty-nine years' service, is still on duty.

Benny Havens, the tutelar saint of the West Point graduates, was living in my day, though I cannot recall that I ever saw him. His, among army men, is a name to conjure by, for even those who never frequented his house, or toasted Generals Brady or Worth, or Scott beneath its roof, or sung "Petite Coquille" in memory of O'Brien, know by tradition of that old haunt and its well-bred keeper Benny must have been much above the ordinary run of contraband dealers or bar-keepers, to have inspired such esteem in the hearts of our bravest and best. All the old fellows, after graduation, and sometimes after fame had come to them, would find their way back to that secluded spot. What a ring and joy

there is to those old verses! How they survive the shocks of time! How we rise to our feet and shout to hear them, as the Frenchman does to his Marseillaise!

'Tis said by commentators, when to other worlds we go, We follow the same handicraft we did in this below; If this be true philosophy (the sexton, he says, no,) What days of dance and song we'll have at Benny Havens O!

To our regiments, now, fellows, we all must shortly go, And look as sage as parsons when they tell of what's below! We must cultivate the graces—do everything "just so," And never talk to ears polite of Benny Havens O!

May the army be augmented, may promotion be less slow, May our country, in the hour of need, be ready for a foe. May we find a soldier's resting place beneath a soldier's blow, And space enough beside our graves for Benny Havens O.

And that verse as appropriate to-day as when it was written—

'Tis a proverb that republics to their veterans thankless grow, And for a youth of services award an age of woe! Then, if a private station claim most honor here below, Give us the one now occupied by Benny Havens O!

I cannot recall a time prior to the existence of the present chapel, library, and academic building.

Grant Hall, or the Mess Hall, as I prefer to call it,

the new hospital, the riding school (a monument to Col. Robert E. Lee, under whose superintendency it was built), the headquarters, and many public buildings, and residences I have myself seen erected. Indeed, the old Point of my boyhood was a shabby place, as contrasted with the West Point of to-day, with its paved sidewalks, gas-lights, water works, and floweradorned houses. The former mess hall, a rambling old den, stood opposite my house on that angle of the plain now covered by a beautiful grove of trees, all of which I saw planted, and where stands the statue erected to Colonel Thayer, "the father of the Academy "Nothing, I think, so impresses one with the flight of time and the rapid advance of years as this unsparing growth of trees. If we are ever idle they are not, but year after year add rings to their girth, till we are ashamed any longer to think when they and we were saplings.

I wonder if any survivor, and they are singularly few (Commander Alfred T. Mahan, Capt. Robert E. Lee, Prof. John T. Weir, Lieutenant Roe, Colonel Bartlett, or any of the boys of that old school), recalls with me how we used to play "I

spy!" around the library building. Good, kind, genial old Fries, still at his post in hale old age (was he ever young?) occasionally made a sortic and repelled our noisy aggressions.

As I jot down these rambling notes, one thought suggesting another, I find the unities of composition sacrificed on the altar of memory. Never before have I felt so lenient towards the garrulities of age. I now know myself how easy it is to fall into senile chat and gossip, and reminiscence. Still, as the old soldier said when court-martialed, "You cannot expect all the cardinal virtues for \$13.00 a month," nor a finished essay from a private of the Tenth Rhode Island Infantry

I pass, as being, perhaps, of greater interest to the present audience, to a brief consideration of men I have known at the Point. The first superintendent that I can recall was Capt. Henry Brewerton, of the Corps of Engineers, who served from 1845 to 1852, when he was relieved by Col. Robert E. Lee, whose office expired in 1855.

Boy as I was when the war broke out, a student here in college, my grief was poignant at the defection of Colonel Lee. He had been my childish ideal of a soldier and a gentleman. His military bearing, his uniform courtesy, his gentle kindness to us children, endeared him greatly to us all. His house was to me almost like my own; his son, bearing the same name as the father, was my closest friend. After the war young Lee and myself buried the hatchet and resumed our friendship. I would go a good many miles to-day to see him.

As you all know, General Lee married the daughter of G. W. Parke Custis, the adopted son of Washington. I remember, in the house at West Point, many articles of furniture and souvenirs of Washington from the home of the Lees, at Arlington. The last time I ever saw General Lee, was, I think, in 1856, when he returned to the Academy as a member of a court-martial. I met him on the Library steps, when giving me the messages of his son, he cordially invited me to Arlington. The only time I ever saw my friend's home was when, as a volunteer, I was passing over Long Bridge in arms against him. Yes, it was a cruel war, My own family illustrated some of its terrible facts. My mother was, as I have

said, a Virginian. Of her sisters two married United States army officers, Captain Merrill and good old Gen. Sidney Burbank, whom some of you may have known. Her niece is the wife of Gen. Horatio G. Wright, of the Sixth Corps, to-day Chief of Engineers; Col. Robert Williams, at one time colonel of the First Massachusetts Cavalry and who married the widow of Stephen A. Douglas, is her cousin; Col. William E. Merrill, of the Engineers, and Capt. Clayton Burbank, of the Infantry, are her nephews. Now, while all these were on the Federal side, her brothers, and, indeed, many of my Virginia relatives were on the other. Very bitter feeling was the result.

General Lec was succeeded by Gen. John G. Barnard. Then followed as superintendents Col. Richard Delafield (for the second time), Colonel Bowman, Col. Zealous B. Tower, Colonel Cullum and Colonel Pitcher. Of these, I have had intimate acquaintance only with General Tower and General Cullum. I have known all the later incumbents, Schofield, Merritt and Parke.

As commandants I have seen and known Capt.

Bradford R. Alden, Capt. Robert T. Garnett, Captain Walker, Colonel Hardee, Colonel Clitz, Colonel Upton, Colonel Hasbrouck, and the present incumbent, Colonel Hawkins.

All the old professors of my day are either dead or retired. Dennis H. Mahan was professor of engineering; Albert E. Church, of mathematics; W. H. C. Bartlett, of philosophy; Agnel, of French; Robert W. Weir, of drawing. Of the assistants to these professors, or to my father, from time to time, a list would include a majority of the names famous afterwards in the war.

My paper is getting long. I must hasten on. I try to follow that excellent rule of Mr. Weller's, to leave off just when the recipient desires more. You may well ask me whether with this environment I never myself thought of entering the Academy. Yes, it was at one time my desire, and the story of that experience, as it brings out certain other matters, may prove of interest.

In the summer of 1860 a Commission met at West Point nominally to investigate the conduct and discipline of the Academy. Its composition was remarkable. In it were such historic names as Jefferson Davis, Robert Anderson, Andrew H. Humphreys, Senator Foote, Lieut. J. C. Ives. It was the last summer before the war, and one of peculiar gaiety and interest at the Point—a sort of culmination of pleasure, as it were, before the sundering of so many sacred ties. I was then seventeen, well, active, hopeful, easily excited by the scenes around me.

In the first class of Cadets that summer were Adelbert Ames, afterwards General, and Governor of Mississippi; Henry W Kingsbury, killed at Antietam; Emory Upton, afterwards the well-known author of tactics; Charles E. Hazlitt, killed at Gettysburg; Judson Kilpatrick, Henry C. Hasbrouck, lately commandant of Cadets, and Guy V. Henry, now a colonel of infantry.

I was a guest that summer of my father's successor, Professor Henry L. Kendrick. During his whole stay at West Point he was noted for his hospitality, his genial manners, his quaint and witty stories. At his house, my own old home, I often met members of the Commission, as well as other distinguished

I remember to this day some of the anecdotes I then heard. I recall how Ives told us of his exploration of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. Actuated by a thousand recollections as well as by the immediate environment, I resolved to seek an appointment as cadet, I took the advice of Professors Church and Kendrick, as well as that of General Humphreys, who had been a cadet with my father, and addressed myself to Jefferson Davis, then Senator from Mississippi and lately Secretary of War. The interview took place on the piazza of Roe's Hotel. After promising me his influence, and advising me to jog his memory the next winter; he asked me the population of Providence, and appeared astonished at its size, even then. How much more must have been his surprise two years after to learn of the Fourteenth Rhode Island Regiment, not to speak of the immortal Tenth! After my return to Providence I calmly thought over the situation, and knowing the vacuity that Nature had given me in place of the mathematical bump, I concluded not to risk a failure at West Point. Apropos of Jefferson Davis, I ought to add a curious item from one of

my father's letters, written long before the war, viz., in 1856, in which he shows almost a gift of prophecy, certainly an accurate knowledge of Davis.

My father writes: "Yesterday we were honored? by a visit from the Secretary of War, (October 11th) the Achitophel of the present administration.

'For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
. implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the State.
To compass this a sacred bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook.
. yet still affecting fame
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.'

Do not these lines of Dryden's fit well?"

Again he writes: "Did you not like Sumner's comparison of our recent check to the result of the fight at Bunker Hill? It has taught us our strength. The truth is the South was and is awfully scared. They never bluster more than when just ready to give up. The nullifiers were threatening 'to go to the death for the sugar' only the day before I, as officer of the guard, had it under lock and key on Sullivan's Island. I have no fear of the future of our country.

New England and her glorious progeny have been and will be true to the great cause of human liberty"

Again: "I have no doubt that when the occasion calls for it the right man will be found to sweep away the rascally set who are now uppermost in public places. There are many now devoting their energies to other things, scorning the petty political chicanery of the day, who, when the great questions of free speech, or free soil are to be *fought* for, will step forth as leaders to the armies of deep-feeling patriots who are ready to risk all in defence of their dearest rights."

What a joy he would have felt when the triumph came, to know that the men he had seen grow up around him, were the "leaders of the armies," Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, McPherson, Burnside, Schofield, Sedgwick, Hooker, and that long line of gallant and efficient officers whose record is the history of their country.

That I am myself proud of my birthplace none of you can doubt. "I love its rocks and templed hills," its noble river, winding to the sea, but above all its Academy, now so famous the world over. I believe

in its past and confidently look forward to its future. It does not stand still, but grows and expands in usefulness with the times. Should occasion again demand the service of its sons in arms, they will be found, even those who in this time of peace have lain aside the sword, battling again for their country's weal. And let us not forget, in this connection, that we are at last a united nation. The once alienated South sends now her brave contingent. Believe me, in any future contest involving our national honor her children will be found with ours, foremost in the fight.

lected for months if at all during the winter; and this might have delayed that memorable march for so long a time that the extent of the disaster arising from the loss of Allatoona cannot now be told.

Such I believe to be the importance of the battle of Allatoona.